

10/524637

DT05 Rec'd PCT/PTO 16 FEB 2005

TRANSLATION OF ANNEXES TO THE  
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

## METHOD AND DEVICE FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF NOTIFICATIONS

## Description:

The invention relates to a method for the transmission of notifications by means of a notification component to users of an electronic parcel compartment system within a postal shipping system in which data from at least one database is transmitted to a central sending component, where it is converted into notification information and the notification information is transmitted to a communication interface and from the communication interface to at least one receiving device, whereby notification jobs are stored in a storage module and at least some of the requests for the transmission of notifications are transmitted by a control circuit to the storage module and a reading module acquires the notification jobs contained in the storage module and transmits them to the central sending component.

The invention also relates to a device for the transmission of notifications to users of an electronic parcel compartment system within a postal shipping system having at least one database, one central sending component and one communication interface for the transmission of the notification information to receiving devices.

The invention relates especially to a method and to a device for informing senders or recipients of mailpieces about the status of the shipment.

A method of the generic type is disclosed in French Patent FR 2 563 987. With this prior-art method, information about the filling status of an electronic parcel compartment system is stored in a database of a server and can be retrieved from there.

Another notification method of the generic type is known from U.S. Pat. No. 5,790,974. With this method, two separate databases, each containing calendar information, are connected to each other and each contain software agents that allow a data comparison between the databases.

Another method of the generic type is known from U.S. Pat. No. 6,064,976. This method checks whether a user is present in a predetermined area. If the user is present in the area, then the actual arrival time of the user and an estimated arrival time of the user are compared to each other.

Moreover, U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,264 discloses a method for the transmission of the status of a shipment of a user in which an entry is generated in a central database when a user orders a shipment. If the status of the shipment changes, for example, when it is transferred to a delivery company, when it is transported to different stations or when it is dropped off at the destination, the status change is recorded in the database. This recording can be done manually or electronically. A notification component continuously uses a query module to query status changes in the database and generates messages to the appertaining users about a shipment for which the status has changed. The notification is preferably done by e-mail.

The invention is based on the objective of developing a method of the generic type that allows the most reliable and quickest possible individual notification of users of an electronic parcel compartment system.

In particular, the invention should be suitable for the transmission of individual notifications to numerous users of an electronic parcel compartment system.

According to the invention, the objective is achieved by a method and by a device according to Claims 1 and 3.

Here, a method of this generic type is carried out in such a way that a method of the generic type is carried out in such a way that data from at least one database is transmitted to a central sending component (ZVK), where it is converted into notification information, and in that the notification information is transmitted to a communication interface and from the communication interface to one or more receiving devices.

An especially preferred embodiment of the invention is characterized in that, using at least one template, the central sending component converts the data transmitted from the database into the notification information. The template is created, for example, on the basis of XSL:FO (eXtensible Stylesheet Language Formatting Objects). It is especially advantageous to add data to a template.

It is especially advantageous for a control circuit to control the transmission of notification information.

The job requests for the transmission of notifications are transmitted at least partially by a control circuit.

Here, it is especially advantageous for at least some of the requests for the transmission of notifications to be transmitted by the control circuit directly to the central sending component.

In order to allow a notification of users at prescribed times and/or to utilize data transmission capacities more efficiently, it is advantageous for at least some of the

## New Claims:

1. A method for the transmission of notifications by means of a notification component to users of an electronic parcel compartment system within a postal shipping system in which data from at least one database (KT, PD, AD) is transmitted to a central sending component (ZVK), where it is converted into notification information (BI) and the notification information (BI) is transmitted to a communication interface and from the communication interface to at least one receiving device, whereby notification jobs are stored in a storage module (Communication Request Queue, CRC) and at least some of the requests for the transmission of notifications are transmitted by a control circuit (AL) to the storage module (CRC) and a reading module (CR) acquires the notification jobs contained in the storage module (CRC) and transmits them to the central sending component (ZVK),

characterized in that

the information for creating jobs is transmitted to the control circuit (AL) via an external interface (EI), whereby the information depends on events within the postal shipping system, in that the events are categorized in classes and in that the events trigger defined, definable or variable processing steps by the notification component.

2. The method according to Claim 1,

characterized in that,

using at least one template (T1, T2, T3), the central sending component (ZVK) converts the data transmitted from the database (KT, PD, AD) into the notification information (BI).

3. A device for the transmission of notifications to users of an electronic parcel compartment system within a postal shipping system having at least one database (KT, PD, AD), one central sending component (ZVK) for converting data from the database (KT, PD, AD) into notification information (BI) and one communication interface for the transmission of the notification information (BI) to receiving devices,

characterized in that

the device comprises an external interface EI that serves for receiving information about events at an electronic parcel compartment system within the postal shipping system and that is connected to a control circuit (AL) equipped with transmission means for the transmission of notification job requests to a storage module (CRC) that stores the notification requests, and in that the storage module (CRC) is connected to a reading unit (CR) that transmits the notification jobs to a central sending component (ZVK).